

**ACADEMIC SENATE
of
CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY
San Luis Obispo, CA**

AS-769-13

RESOLUTION ON HONORS PROGRAM

1 **Background:** On March 31 1995, President Warren Baker approved Academic Senate
2 Resolution AS-434-95, Resolution on a Proposal for a University Honors Program (attached). In
3 receiving the resolution President Baker stated:
4

5 I was pleased to receive the Academic Senate's Resolution on a Proposal for a
6 University Honors Program and will by copy of this memo ask Vice President
7 Koob to oversee its implementation. This new program promises to encourage the
8 enrollment and retention of diverse, highly motivated students. They will find in it
9 an opportunity to explore a variety of modes of learning and to gain an
10 appreciation for the interconnectedness of knowledge in learning contexts crafted
11 carefully to promote creativity and intellectual rigor. As a seedbed for innovation
12 in teaching and learning the program promises to enrich the entire university. I
13 would like to congratulate the faculty for its development. It is yet another
14 example of the faculty's commitment to our students and to the tradition of
15 quality undergraduate instruction at Cal Poly.
16

17 On May 21 2012, the Honors Task Force issued its report (attached). The report included an
18 analysis of the program as well as a number of recommendations.
19

20 WHEREAS, The Academic Senate has approved Academic Senate Resolution AS-434-95,
21 Resolution on a Proposal for a University Honors Program; and
22

23 WHEREAS, Many of the remarks in President Baker's response to the resolution remain valid;
24 and
25

26 WHEREAS, In Fall 2011, the Academic Senate formed the Honors Task Force comprised of
27 both faculty and students; and
28

29 WHEREAS, on May 21 2012, the Honors Task Force issued its report, which included an
30 analysis of the program as well as a number of recommendations; and
31

32 WHEREAS, The Academic Senate has not reviewed the Honors Task Force report as of yet;
33 and
34

35 WHEREAS, Curricular decisions are the prerogative of the faculty; and
36

37 WHEREAS, Students within the Honors Program have formally requested that a final decision
38 regarding the Honors Program not be implemented at this time; therefore be it
39
40 RESOLVED: That during the next two years the Academic Senate and the Provost shall work
41 with the Honors Program to establish a process that will lead to an improved
42 Honors Program; and be it further
43
44 RESOLVED: That during this two-year time period the Academic Senate and the Honors
45 Program shall work to establish an approved curriculum and program assessment
46 plan; and be it further
47
48 RESOLVED: It is recommended that during this two-year time period the Honors Program shall
49 not be closed, the funding for the Honors Program shall not be reduced, and new
50 students shall continue to be admitted into the Honors Program.

Proposed by: Sema Alptekin, Director, Cal Poly Honors Program
Harvey Greenwald, former Academic Senate Chair
Reginald Gooden, former Academic Senate Chair
John Hampsey, Professor of English
Myron Hood, former Academic Senate Chair
George Lewis, former Academic Senate Chair
James Mueller, professor of Mathematics
Max Riedlsperger, former Academic Senate Chair
Date: April 30 2013
Revised: May 25 2013
Revised: June 4 2013

Honors Task Force
May 21, 2012

The Honors Task Force (HTF) met weekly during Spring Quarter and biweekly during Winter Quarter 2012. Members include: Ken Brown (Philosophy), Jessica Carson (Administrative Analyst, Programs and Planning), Adrienne Greve (City & Regional Planning), Jim Mueller (Math), Erika Rogers, (former director of the Honors Program), Tom Trice (History), Lou Tornatzky (Industrial Technology), Sema Alpekin (Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering and Director of the Honors Program), Cheri Baumgarten (Administrative Analyst, Honors Program), and Kate Murphy (History), task force chair. Honors students and seniors Brita Bookser (Psychology), Alexandra Highsmith (Business), & Michele Jenkins (Math) also participated in the HTF's discussions.

Background

The Honors Program was created by Academic Senate Resolution AS-434-95 in March 1995 and implemented in the Fall of 1999. Currently, 519 students, representing every college on campus, are enrolled in the program. Sixty-four faculty members have taught in the program during the last seven years.

The HTF was created in Fall 2011 to review the current state of the Honors Program and to recommend future directions. Specifically, the HTF's charge was to examine the possibility of revising the existing program so that all students have similar opportunities to those in the Honors Program.

After researching Cal Poly's current program, honors programs at peer institutions and within the CSU system, and the relevant literature, the HTF concluded that the program was already open to all qualified students, who may apply for admission to the program at any point in their Cal Poly careers. Furthermore, the HTF unanimously agreed that a smaller, more focused program best serves the interests of the students and the university as a whole. Based on its research and discussions, the HTF offers the following recommendations and observations about the program.

Vision

The HTF's vision for the Honors Program is best encapsulated in the program's new mission statement, which developed out of the task force's discussions:

The Cal Poly Honors Program provides an academically enriched learning experience for the university's most outstanding and highly motivated students. It brings together students, faculty, and friends of the university to seek challenges, participate in experiential and interdisciplinary learning, grow as individuals, and expand the boundaries of their academic potential.

Throughout its curricular and extracurricular programming, the Honors Program fosters active intellectual engagement and a mutual exchange of ideas, in which students and faculty are partners in discovery. Honors courses, research opportunities, housing, service learning projects, and other activities provide the university's most outstanding and highly motivated students with an enriched learning experience in the company of similarly motivated peers.

Value

It is the opinion of the HTF that the Honors Program represents an integral part of Cal Poly, not just for students and faculty involved with the program, but for the university as a whole.

From Fall 2007 to Spring 2009,¹ the Honors Undergraduate Research Program furnished a lively and highly successful example of how to employ the Teacher-Scholar model while simultaneously promoting interdisciplinary and experiential education. It provided opportunities for students to work with faculty on research projects, to present their findings at local and national venues, and to publish their results in an Honors research journal in 2008 and 2009. Furthermore, the program promoted interdisciplinary, cross-college research by matching faculty projects with student interest, so that students from Liberal Arts and Science and Math worked with an Engineering professor on the "Polytech Waterbag" project, while an Engineering student collaborated with a Liberal Arts professor to research human trafficking. The program allowed students to receive course credit for their research and enabled faculty members otherwise not involved in the program to receive funding to work with honors students. The HTF recommends that when funds become available, this program be reinstated and made a permanent focal point of the Honors Program.

While by no means the only entity on campus doing so, the Honors Program already embodies many of the university's strategic imperatives. The program promotes whole-system thinking through its interdisciplinary nature. The Honors Undergraduate Research Program illustrated the potent possibilities of a well-funded, ambitious commitment to the Teacher-Scholar model. The Honors Program has also fostered a culture of community engagement and leadership, evidenced in the service-learning components of the program, the work of the Honors Student Board community service committee, and the multitude of Honors students who serve in leadership positions in organizations throughout campus.

While endorsing the value of the current Honors Program, the HTF also finds that the institution has not taken full advantage of the strengths and potential value of this program. The HTF offers the following examples of areas where this could be achieved:

- The Honors Program serves as an incubator for innovative pedagogy, by allowing faculty the opportunity to experiment with new approaches, subjects, and pedagogies that, when proven successful, serve as prototypes within the broader curriculum. The opportunity to use the Honors framework as an incubator for additional course innovation, including those that fall outside the bounds of disciplinary constraints, could be advertised to faculty in general. Such opportunities could help to attract and retain faculty and to assist junior faculty in enhancing their Promotion and Tenure portfolios.
- The success of the Honors Undergraduate Research Program could be employed by the University Grants Development Office as both a model for successful grant proposal writing for undergraduate research as well as a vehicle for additional grant proposal development.
- A robust Honors Program would further enhance Cal Poly's proven ability to attract top students. Given the number of out-of-state students in the Honors Program, the HTF believes this could help to increase out-of-state and, generally, more diverse applicants.
- Nationwide, it has been shown that strong Honors Programs can attract major donor funding to campuses. Here in California, several Cal State institutions have been the recipients of major

¹ The subsequent academic year, 2009-2010, marked the beginning of major budget cuts to the program.

gifts tied to their Honors programs; approximately one quarter of honors programs within the CSU have dedicated endowments. The Honors Program is a potential magnet for external funding that has not been utilized to date.²

The HTF maintains that if the Honors Program is encouraged to thrive, it will also help the institution to thrive. But these goals cannot be realized by the bottom-up efforts of a partially-funded Honors Director. The initiative must come from an institutional commitment, by which Cal Poly not only recognizes, acknowledges, and embraces the strengths of its programs, but, in addition, leverages those strengths for the greater good of the entire campus.

Next Steps

The HTF is very aware that many of its recommendations depend upon the availability of funding. Therefore, the HTF believes that it is crucial that the program secure sustainable funding for the future and become less reliant upon state funds. As a result, the Honors Program has begun a conversation with University Advancement to secure endowing gifts for the program as part of the capital campaign. Such funding would be used to:

- reestablish the Honors Undergraduate Research Program
- establish an Honors Senior Showcase to share the results of student work
- purchase faculty release time (especially to facilitate team-taught interdisciplinary classes and to develop new courses)
- fund student scholarships³
- support administrative staff and program leadership

The interdisciplinarity embodied in the Honors Undergraduate Research Program remains a defining feature of the Honors Program as a whole. Presently, the program accomplishes this through HNRS 100 (the required introductory course that is currently taught around the theme of sustainability, diversity, and ethics) and through Honors G.E. courses. In the future, the HTF recommends that the program add a capstone course to the Honors curriculum. An Honors capstone class would provide Honors students with a culminating interdisciplinary experience that builds on the foundation laid by HNRS 100 and Honors G.E. courses. Although the capstone course could take various forms, the HTF envisions these seminar classes as interdisciplinary, inquiry-based, and likely project-driven seminars that encourage students to solve real-world problems by drawing upon the breadth of knowledge acquired through G.E. and the depth of expertise developed within their respective majors.

² The literature on honors programs nation-wide suggests that strong honors programs can play an important role in the recruitment of high-ability students, in faculty retention, and in institutional fundraising. K. Celeste Campbell, "The Perceived Value of Honors Work as It Relates to Faculty Promotion and Tenure," *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council*, (Spring/Summer 2003); K. Celeste Campbell, "Allocation of Resources: Should Honors Programs Take Priority?" *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council*, (Spring/Summer 2005); Robert A. Sevier, "There's Power in Honor," *University Business: The Magazine for College and University Administrators*, <http://universitybusiness.ccsct.com/page.cfm?p=209>; National Collegiate Honors Council, "Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors Program," <http://nchchonors.org/faculty-directors/basic-characteristics-of-a-fully-developed-honors-program/>

³ Nationally, 75% of honors programs offer scholarships to their students. B.T. Long, *Attracting the best: The use of honors programs to compete for students* (Chicago, IL: Spencer Foundation, 2002), 10. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service no. ED465355).

In the short-term, the HTF recommends that the program raises its GPA requirement for students to graduate in the program to a 3.5 minimum and correspondingly raise its requirements for underclassmen to remain in the program. The HTF also concluded that the program needs to raise its entrance requirements for freshmen applicants in order to reduce the program to a more manageable size (to approximately 100 students per class).

In its research, the HTF discovered that three-quarters of Honors Programs in the CSU offer priority registration to their students. The HTF believes that such a privilege would strengthen the program and, especially, increase completion rates by enabling students to more easily navigate the curricular requirements of both their majors and the program. The HTF believes that the program meets the requirements outlined by the University Registration and Scheduling Committee's policy on granting priority registration status and therefore recommends that the program petition the committee to request priority registration for its students.

The IITF recommends that the Honors Program establish an advisory board, comprised of faculty from each college, to assist the director in the implementation of the HTF's recommendations and to provide a more permanent mechanism for advising the director on matters of policy, curriculum, and development.⁴

In recent weeks the HTF has had preliminary discussions with the UNIV task force (UTF) on the subject of encouraging interdisciplinary education on campus and, in particular, the UTF's proposal for a Center for Integrative Education that might provide a future home for the Honors Program. The HTF shares UTF's commitment to encouraging interdisciplinary education at Cal Poly, and recommends that the Honors Program be utilized as both a model and a vehicle for achieving this goal.

⁴ The National Collegiate Honors Council identifies such an advisory board as a characteristic of a fully developed honors program. "Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors Program," <http://nchchonors.org/faculty-directors/basic-characteristics-of-a-fully-developed-honors-program/>

Adopted: March 7, 1995

**ACADEMIC SENATE
OF
CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY
San Luis Obispo, California**

**AS-434-95
RESOLUTION ON
PROPOSAL FOR A UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM**

RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate of Cal Poly approve the attached "Proposal for a University Honors Program" and, be it further

RESOLVED: That the attached "Proposal for a University Honors Program" be forwarded to President Baker and Vice President Koob for approval and implementation.

Proposed by: Ad Hoc Committee to Study a University
Honors Program

Date: January 31, 1995

Proposal for a
University Honors Program

The following proposal for a University Honors Program developed from the work of an ad hoc committee¹ appointed beginning spring quarter 1992 by Vice President Koob to consider establishing an honors program at Cal Poly. After reviewing the major literature relevant to honors programs, the committee met regularly to design a program which would fit the needs of students and faculty within the terms of Cal Poly's Strategic Plan.

Description

Objectives

A University Honors Program will provide intellectually challenging opportunities for bright and motivated undergraduate students to enrich and broaden their academic experiences. In addition, Honors courses will stimulate promising students to develop their abilities as fully as possible, encouraging them to develop high intellectual standards, independent thought, logical analysis, and insight into the nature of knowledge.

The Honors Program is additionally designed to help Cal Poly attract and retain diverse and talented students. This core of students will, in turn, contribute to the learning climate at Cal Poly. Faculty will have the opportunity to work with these students in a pedagogically creative environment encouraging close faculty-student interaction. The program will also provide an alternative to current GE&B requirements, setting an example of academic excellence and providing an opportunity for curricular experimentation which, when successful, can be incorporated into the broader GE&B curriculum.

Students in the University Honors Program will elect Honors sections of General Education and Breadth courses as freshmen and sophomores, and participate in Honors Colloquia as juniors and seniors. The program, designed primarily at its inception for entering freshmen, will provide a coherent program of instruction for its students. Once initiated, the program will make efforts to accommodate transfer students.

¹The committee included Linda Dalton (City & Regional Planning), Gary Field (Graphic Communication), Ed Garner (Mechanical Engineering), George Lewis (Mathematics), Ed Mayo (History), Diane Michelfelder (Philosophy), Walt Perlick (Business Administration), Bill Rife (Chemistry), Dave Schaffner (Agribusiness), and John Harrington, Chair (English).

Experience at other universities suggests that about 25 percent of those eligible will enroll in an Honors Program. The program would begin with approximately 50-60 students. Once the program is fully established, the graduates will number about 100 per year. Students would be admitted independently of their selection of a major at Cal Poly. Some students would enter the major in the traditional way as freshman, also entering the majors. Those undeclared majors who maintain the standards of the program and who have met lower-division requirements for a chosen major would be guaranteed admission to the major of their choice by the beginning of their junior year. During the advising process, all students would be strongly encouraged to declare a major by the end of their freshman year.

Catalogue Description

Cal Poly's undergraduate Honors Program combines special educational opportunities for talented students with a coherent General Education and Breadth option integrating lower-division course work and upper-division colloquia. Honors courses challenge and stimulate students to develop their intellectual abilities to the fullest. Students may enter the program as freshmen with declared majors or as undeclared majors with admission to the major of choice by the beginning the junior year.* Successful completion of the program will be noted on the student's transcript.

*Students seeking admission to majors with special portfolio admissions will need to follow regular procedures for those majors.

Publicity

A brochure fully describing the Honors Program will be prepared by the Director of Honors to inform prospective students of the various features of Honors at Cal Poly. Additional information about the Program will appear in the expected places such as the catalogue, advisory mailings, and the class schedule.

Program Requirements

The curriculum for entering freshmen and sophomores will emphasize integration of coursework for GE&B. During the junior and senior years various colloquia will encourage application of the fundamentals learned during lower-division coursework. Upon entering the program, students must take at least one Honors course or sequence in two of every three quarters during the freshman and sophomore years. Fifty or more quarter units of designated Honors coursework must be completed to earn an Honors diploma. Faculty from each college will cooperatively design courses, and courses linking technology to the liberal arts and sciences will be encouraged in formulating curriculum. Flexibility and innovation will be major premises in developing the program, including the possibility of traditional tutorial arrangements if appropriate.

Freshman and Sophomore Years

Cal Poly's current GE&B program requires 79 units of coursework, including 12-units at the upper-division level. Because the honors curriculum will emphasize writing, speaking, and critical thinking in small classes, students will receive one unit of additional Area A credit in each of the subject-matter courses of other area courses. Consequently, the 14 units of Area A may, in effect, be exempted from these students' GE&B requirements. All Honors courses will focus on subject matter and, where possible, courses will link various areas of knowledge. All courses are expected to be intellectually rigorous. Also, the program will encourage courses incorporating field trips (to museums, sites, or performances, for example), activities, and liaison with the community. All honors coursework will apply to designated GE&B requirements should students leave the program.

Junior and Senior Years

Students will earn at least 12 units of flexible upper-division GE&B colloquia credit during four or more separate quarters during the junior and senior years. Each colloquium will be designed to earn up to four units of credit, and each will focus on a theme or issue developed by participating faculty. Efforts will be made to link colloquia with ongoing series involving speakers, public performances, or other activities sponsored by various campus programs.

Implementation

The Honors Director, with consultation and approval of the Honors Council and the department chairs, will solicit ideas for new courses from the faculty. These new courses shall fulfill the goals of GE&B but will be given flexibility in achieving these goals. Linked courses will particularly be encouraged to demonstrate the interconnectedness of knowledge. Some sample suggestions from the committee: The Nature and Implications of Darwinism (taught by faculty from the humanities, the sciences, and the social sciences); A Comparison of the Uses of Language in the Humanities, in the Sciences, and in the Technological Disciplines (taught by faculty from the respective areas); Great Traditions of the World (studying the art, music, literature science, and technology from a specific time period).

Proposals for Honors courses will be approved by the Honors Council. A special liaison with the Senate Curriculum and GE&B Committee will be established to allow the flexibility and timeliness needed to develop and implement honors curriculum and establishing procedures for a biannual review.

Honors courses will usually be limited to 18 students. Each Honors course will have an Honors designation (listed in the course catalogue), and course descriptions will indicate which areas of GE&B each course fulfills. Extensive writing will be expected in all courses, and major papers for each course will be kept in the student's file in the Honors office.

With the concurrence of their department chairs, Honors students may elect to complete an Honors Thesis in lieu of a Senior Project. Such projects may involve joint supervision of departmental and honors faculty.

Eligibility

Admission

To be eligible for the program, a student must meet at least two of the following criteria:

- a. SAT (combined Math & Verbal) of 1200 or higher.
- b. Upper 10 percent of high school graduating class.
- c. 3.5 grade point average at Cal Poly for at least 15 units of coursework.
- d. Two or more Advance Placement scores of 4 or 5.
- e. Permission of the Director of the Honors Program.

However, an application from any student will be considered in terms of its individual merit. Any student interested in joining the program may submit other supporting evidence, such as recommendations from previous instructors or documentation that shows the ability to work independently at complex intellectual tasks.

Maintaining Eligibility

Students will be expected to achieve a GPA of 3.0 during their freshman year and to earn a cumulative GPA of 3.3 or higher to graduate with Honors. Participants will be reviewed annually to ascertain that their academic work shows satisfactory quality and progress. After talking with students deemed deficient, the Director will make retention recommendations to the Honors Council. Students disqualified from the program may petition for readmittance when they meet appropriate criteria.

Transcript Notations

Honors students will have "Honors Program" noted on their transcripts. Graduation from the program will be noted on the student's diploma. (Currently, graduates earning honors for academic excellence have the following notations on their diploma: Summa cum laude (3.85 gpa); Magna cum laude (3.70 gpa); and Cum laude (3.50 gpa). Consequently, as in most universities distinguishing graduation in an Honors Program from graduation with academic distinction, we can maintain the distinction with the current language. A student may graduate Summa cum laude, with Honors.)

Honors Dormitory

An effort will be made to provide identified housing for the Honors Program. Freshmen Honors students would be invited to live in a designated dormitory complex in a space sequestered for the program. Following common practice for Honors dormitories, approximately 40% of the students living in the Honors dormitory would be students not participating in the Honors Program. Such an arrangement would enhance intellectual exchange and provide a sense of identity to Honors students. In addition, the space within the dormitory would allow speakers, and perhaps colloquia, in a familiar and comfortable setting.

Program Administrator

Program Director

The Director of the Honors Program will oversee the program and will be the principal advisor for Honors students with undeclared majors. Based upon a recommendation forwarded by the Honors Council, the Vice President for Academic Affairs will appoint the Director to a three-year renewable term. The Director will report to the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Honors Council

The Honors Council will provide oversight and will be the source of university policy governing the program. The Council will consist of the Director of the Honors Program (ex officio), one faculty member from each College (serving three-year, staggered terms) including one representative from the Curriculum Committee and one from the GE&B Committee, three Honors students (serving one year, renewable terms), representatives from SAS, from Admissions, from Academic Records (all three ex officio), and from the Vice President for Academic Affairs (usually the Associate Vice President). Based upon recommendations from the Faculty Senate, faculty members will be appointed by the Vice President for Academic Affairs in consultation with the Honors Director. Students members will be elected by Honors Students.

The Honors Council will approve Honors courses and colloquia, evaluate the program periodically, and advise on matters important to the program.

Honors Faculty

Honors Faculty will be selected jointly by the Director of Honors and the chairperson of the department offering appropriate courses. Faculty will be selected on the basis of their ability to work collectively with faculty in other disciplines, to foster intellectual growth, and to work individually with students. Faculty will be provided with a supportive environment for working with students and will be encouraged to involve themselves at various stages of the development of students. The Honors Faculty will develop curriculum and propose colloquia. Participation in Honors should be viewed as a positive factor in RPT decisions.

State of California
Memorandum

To: Jack D. Wilson, Chair
Academic Senate

Date: 03/31/95

From: Warren J. Baker
President

Copies: R. Koob

Subject: Academic Senate Resolution 434-95 Resolution on a Proposal for a University Honors Program

I was pleased to receive the Academic Senate's Resolution on a Proposal for a University Honors Program and will by copy of this memo ask Vice President Koob to oversee its implementation.

This new program promises to encourage the enrollment and retention of diverse, highly motivated students. They will find in it an opportunity to explore a variety of modes of learning and to gain an appreciation for the interconnectedness of knowledge in learning contexts crafted carefully to promote creativity and intellectual rigor. As a seedbed for innovation in teaching and learning the program promises to enrich the entire university. I would like to congratulate the faculty for its development. It is yet another example of the faculty's commitment to our students and to the tradition of quality undergraduate instruction at Cal Poly.

State of California
M e m o r a n d u m

CAL POLY
SAN LUIS OBISPO

To: Steven Rein
Chair, Academic Senate

Date: July 11, 2013

From: Jeffrey D. Armstrong
President



E-Copies: K. Enz Finken
B. Kinsley
M. Pedersen

Subject: Response to Academic Senate Resolution AS-769-13
Resolution on Honors Program

This memo formally acknowledges receipt of the above-entitled Academic Senate resolution.